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11 February 1955

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: The Situation in Laos

1. In NIE 63-7-54, "Probable Developments in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia through July 1956," we estimated that "Pathet Lao followers of the Viet Minh will probably continue to exercise considerable control in the provinces of Phong Saly and Sam Neua." The estimate pointed out that the Laotian army was unlikely to exercise effective control in these provinces, but Communist activity was expected to be "moderated" by Communist desire to forestall unfavorable Indian reactions.

2. Since the publication of the estimate, however, the Communists have proceeded, in flagrant violation of the spirit and letter of the Armistice, to secure their position in northern Laos. At the same time, the Laotian government has failed to deal effectively with Communist military and political maneuvers. In this situation, if present trends continue, there is a possibility that Laotian influence in Phong Saly and Sam Neua provinces may be completely extinguished and a firm Communist bridgehead for further operations within Laos established within the next twelve months.

3. We intend to review the situation in Laos and the validity of the existing estimate (NIE 63-7-54) during the 2nd quarter of 1955.

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National Estimates

Enclosure: Communist and Government Activities
in Laos

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